



"This," I went on, my thought shifting into a new channel. "A longer servitude. Up to this moment my one dream has been to escape, but I must give that up now. You have placed me under obligations to serve. Between us this has become a debt of honor."

"But wait," she said earnestly, "for I had even thought of that. I was sure you would feel that way—any gentleman would. Still there is a way out. You were sentenced as an indentured servant. I saw the entry myself. It read: 'Geoffrey Carlyle, Master Mariner, indentured to the Colonies for the term of twenty years, unless sooner released; crime, high treason.' Any indentured man, under our Maryland laws, can buy his freedom, after serving a certain proportion of his sentence. Did you not know that?"

I did know it, yet somehow had never connected the fact before directly with my own case. God! what a relief! I stood up straight once more in the stature of a man. I hardly know what wild words I might have spoken had the opportunity been mine; but at that instant the figure of a man crossed the deck toward us, emerging from the open cabin door. Against the gleam of yellow light I recognized the trim form advancing, and as instantly stepped back into shadow. My quick movement caused her to turn and face him.

"What!" he exclaimed, and evidently surprised at his discovery. "It is indeed Mistress Dorothy—out here alone? 'Twas my thought you were safely in your cabin long since. But—prithce—I mistake; you are not alone."

"I was preparing to go in," she answered, ignoring his latter words. "The night already looks stormy."

"But your friend?"

The tone in which he spoke was insistent, almost insolent in its demand, and she hesitated no longer in meeting the challenge.

"Your pardon, I am sure—Lieutenant Sanchez, this gentleman is Captain Geoffrey Carlyle."

He stood there stiff and straight against the background of light, one hand in affected carelessness caressing the end of a waxed mustache. His face was in shadow, yet I was quite aware of the flash of his eyes.

"Ah, indeed—some passenger I have not chanced to observe before?"

"A prisoner," she returned distinctly. "You may perhaps remember my uncle pointed him out to us when he first came aboard."

"And you have been out here alone, talking with the fellow?"

"Certainly—why not?"

"Why the man is a felon, convicted of crime, sentenced to deportation."

"It is not necessary that we discuss this, sir," she interposed, rather proudly. "As my personal conduct is not a matter for your criticism, I shall retire now. No, thank you, you need not come."

He stopped still, staring blankly after her as she vanished; then wheeled about to vent his anger on me.

"Carlyle, hey!" he exclaimed sneeringly. "A familiar sound that name in my ears. One of the brood out of Buccleugh?"

"A cadet of that line," I managed to admit, wondering. "You know of them?"

"Quite as much as I care to," he said, tone ugly and insulting. Then an idea suddenly occurred to his mind. "Saint Guise, but that would even up the score nicely. You are, as I understand it, sent to Virginia for sale?"

"Yes."

"For how long a term?"

"The sentence was twenty years."

"Hela! and you go to the highest bidder. I'll do it, fellow! To actually own a Carlyle of Buccleugh will be a sweet revenge. 'Twill count for more than were I to tweak the duke's nose."

"A very noble plan for revenge," I admitted. "And one which I am not likely to forget. Unfortunately you come too late. It happens, senior, that I am already safely indentured to Roger Fairfax."

I turned away, but he called angrily after me:

"Do not feel so sure of that Carlyle! I am in the game yet."

"I Had Eight Months of It, Mate."

had the clue—jealousy, the mad, unreasoning jealousy of his race.

I had no false conception as to this; no vagrant thought that her interest in me was any more than a passing fancy, born of sympathy and a desire to aid. Nevertheless, as she had thus already served me, I now owed her service in return, and here was the first call. If conditions made it possible it was my plain duty to place myself between these two.

In the intensity of my feelings I must have unconsciously spoken aloud, for a shaggy head suddenly popped out from the berth beneath where I lay, and Haley's interested voice asked solicitously:

"Hy, thar; whut's up, mate? Ye was mutterin' 'way thar an' not disturbin' me none, till ye got ter talkin' 'bout sum fellar called Sanchez. Then I sorter got a bit interested. I know'd that cuss onet," and he spat, as though to thus better express his feelings. "The d—d ornary pirate."

I laughed, my whole mental mood changed by this remark.

"Do you refer to 'Black Sanchez'?"

"I've heard of him; were you over in his hands?"

"Was I?" he laughed grimly. "I had eight months of it, mate, and a greater demon never sailed. The things I saw done ye'd never believe no human bein could do. If ever thar was two people in one skin, sir, it's that 'Black Sanchez. When he's playin' off fer good he's as soft an' sweet as a dandy in 'Piccadilly, an' when he's real he's like a devil in hell."

"Were you a prisoner—or did you sail under him?"

"Both, fer the matter of that. He give me the choice ter serve or walk the plank. I was eighteen, an' hed an o' mother at Deaf."

"I see; but later got away?"

"Ay, I did that," chuckling over the recollection. "But I hed ter wait eight months fer the luck." My neighbor went on to tell at great length the story of his escape.

"I had a shipmate once," I observed, interested in his story, "who claimed to have seen the fellow; he described him as being a very large man, with intensely black, hawklike eyes and a heavy black beard almost hiding his face."

"Maybe he looked like that when he saw him, but he ain't no bigger man than I am; he won't weigh as much by fifteen pound. Fact is he mighty seldom looks the same, fer thet's part o' his game. I've seen him in all sorts o' disguises. It's only his eyes he can't hide, an' thar's been times when I thought they was the ugliest eyes ever I saw. He's sure an ornary devil, an' when he gets mad, I'd rather be afrent of a tiger. Besides fightin' his trade, an' no weakin' ain't gona ter control the sort o' chaps he's got ter handle. Most of 'em would murder him in a minute if they dared. Oh, he's had all right, but yer wouldn't exactly think so, just ter look at him."

"What, then, does he really look like?"

"Oh, a sorter swashbucklin' Spanish don—the kind whut likes ter dress up an' play the dandy. He's got a pink an' white complexion, the Castilian kind, yer know, an' wears a little mustache, waxed up at the ends. I heard he was about forty-five; I reckon he must be thet; but he didn't look older than thirty."

Haley dropped off to sleep, but my mind continued to wander until it conjured up once again this West Indian pirate. His name and the story of his exploits had been familiar to me ever since I first went to sea. While only one among many operating in those haunted waters his resourcefulness, daring and cruelty had won him an infamous reputation, a name of horror. In those days, when the curse of piracy made the sea a terror, no ordinary man could ever have succeeded in attaining such supremacy to crime.

Black Sanchez—and Haley pictured him as a dandified, ordinary appearing individual, with white and red complexion, a small mustache and flashing dark eyes—a mere Spanish gaiter, without special distinction. Why, that description, strangely enough, fitted almost exactly this fellow on board this other Sanchez.

The suspicion which had crept into my mind was so absurd, so unspeakably silly and impossible that I laughed at myself and dismissed the crazy thought. Chuckling over it I finally fell asleep.

CHAPTER V.

The Namur of Rotterdam.

The brig, with all sails set and favored by a strong wind, drew rapidly in toward the point of landing. The great majority of the prisoners remained on deck, chained together and helpless, yet surrounded by armed guards, while the few who had already been purchased by passengers humbly followed their new masters ashore the moment the gangplank touched the soil of Virginia. There were five of us altogether thus favored, but I was the only one owing allegiance to Roger Fairfax. The rule landing wharf along which we lay was already densely crowded. Altogether it was a bustling scene, full of change and color, the air noisy with shouting voices, the line of wharves filled with a number of vessels, either newly arrived or preparing to depart. It was with no small difficulty we succeeded in forcing our way through this jostling throng until we attained to an open space ashore. I followed closely behind the three composing our party, Roger Fairfax and Sanchez, with the laughing girl between them for protection. Fairfax was evidently well known to a number present, for he was being greeted on all sides with hearty handshakes and words of welcome.

We boarded the Fairfax sloop. The baggage was transferred. I worked with the Fairfax servants and it cut my pride to the quick. Out in the bay I was sent to the wheel.

Not another sail appeared across that surface of waters, not even a fisherman's boat, the only other vessel visible along our course being a dim outline close in against that far-away headland toward which I had been instructed to steer. I stared at this object, at first believing it a wreck, but finally distinguishing the bare masts of a medium-sized bark, evidently riding at anchor only a few hundred yards off shore.

The Spaniard presently pointed out to Fairfax the position of the bark.

"Surely a strange place in which to anchor, Lieutenant," said Fairfax.

"Bark rigged and very heavily sparred. Seems to be all right. What do you make of the vessel?"

TR. Spaniard twisted his mustache but exhibited little interest, although his gaze was upon the craft.

"Decidedly Dutch, I should say," he answered slowly. "The beggars seem quite at home there, with all their washing out. Not a usual anchorage?"

"No, nor a particularly safe one. Travers' place is beyond the bend. We'll put up with him tonight. D—n me, Sanchez, I believe I'll hail the fellow and find out what he is doing in there."

Sanchez nodded, carelessly striking flint and steel in an effort to relight a cheroot.

We came about slowly. The distance to be covered was not great, and in less than ten minutes we were drawing in toward the high stern of the anchored vessel.

No evidence of life appeared on board, although everything looked shipshape aloft and aloft, and a rather extensive wash flapped in the wind forward, bespeaking a generous crew. A moment later my eyes made out the name painted across the stern—Namur of Rotterdam.

Fairfax leaned far out across the rail as we swept in closer, but the Spaniard exhibited no particular interest in the proceedings. A hundred feet distant I held the dancin' sloop to mere steerage-way, while Fairfax hailed.

A red-faced man with a black beard thrust his head up above the after-rail and answered, using English, yet with a faint accent which was not Dutch.

"We ran down to see if you were in any trouble. This is a strange place to anchor. What are you—Dutch?"

The fellow waved his hands in a gesture indicating disgust.

"Dat's eet. Ye're ov Rotterdam—you see ze name ov ze sheep. But ye not sail from thar dis time—no. Ve cum here from ze Barbadoes," he explained brokenly, "wiz cane sugar an' hides. Ve yall here fer our agent."

"But why anchor in a place like this? Why not go on up to the wharves?"

"Ye not? For six—I no trust my crew ashore. Zay Vest Indy niggers, an' ved-run away ven ze chance cum. I know vat zay do."

In spite of my efforts the two vessels were drifting rapidly apart. Dorothy appeared at the door of the cabin and stood there gazing in surprise at the bark, while the moment

he caught sight of her Sanchez went hastily forward, removing his hat with so peculiar a flourish as he approached as to cause me to notice the gesture.

Fairfax waved his hand to me to resume our course. Shortly after he crossed the deck to the wheel. There he stood watching the bark for some time.

"What do you make of her, Carlyle?" he asked finally. "I believe that fellow lied."

"So do I, sir," I answered promptly. "Whatever else he may be, he's no peaceful Dutch trader. That fellow got his accent from south Europe. If he was loaded with cane sugar and hides for market he wouldn't be nearly so high out of water. That bark was in ballast or I miss my guess. Besides if he was a trader where was his crew? I tell you the men on board that hooker had orders to keep down."

"I believe you are right," he admitted frankly. "There is something wrong there. I'll tell Travers and have him send a runner overland to give warning below."

CHAPTER VI.

The Mysterious Sail.

Where I leaned alone against the rail my eyes followed the Spaniard in doubt and questioning, nor could I entirely banish from mind Haley's description of that buccaner bearing a singular name. Yet, in spite of my unconscious desire to connect these two together, I found it simply impossible to associate this rather soft-spoken, effeminate dandy with that bloody villain.

It was already quite dusk when we finally drew in beside Travers' wharf and made fast. Our approach had been noted and Travers himself—a white-haired, white-bearded man, yet still hearty and vigorous, attired in white duck—was on the end of the dock to greet us, together with numerous servants of every shade of color, who immediately bustled themselves toting luggage up the steep path leading toward the house, standing conspicuous amid a grove of trees on the summit of the bank. The others followed, four fellows tugging with difficulty an iron-bound chest, the two older men engaged in earnest conversation, thus leaving Sanchez apparently well satisfied with the opportunity alone to assist the girl.

Except to render the sloop completely secure for the night, there remained little work for us to perform on board. The four of us passed the early evening undisturbed smoking and talking together. So the time passed quickly, and it must have been nearly midnight before we brought out blankets from the forecabin and lay down in any spot we chose on deck.

It was a fair, calm night, but moonless, with but little wind stirring, and a slight haze in the air, obscuring the

vision. The others must have fallen asleep immediately. At last, despairing of slumber, and perchance urged by some premonition of danger, I arose to my feet and moved silently aft.

My startled eyes caught a glimpse of a speck of white emerging from the black shadows—the spectral glimmer of a small sail. The strange craft swept past, so far out that those on board no doubt believed themselves beyond sight from the shore, heading apparently for a point of land, which I vaguely remembered as jutting out to the northward.

(To Be Continued.)

He'd Forgotten.

The school dramatic society was giving its first performance of the season and the play they had chosen for the momentous occasion was "Julius Caesar."

All went smoothly till Caesar's dead body was brought in, and Marc Antony had to deliver his famous speech.

He put his heart into the part and the audience felt acutely for the poor citizens, who were all presumably horror-stricken and overcome with grief, when Antony gently but firmly grasped, as he thought, the face-cloth and slowly, very slowly, began to draw it back.

Just then an excited whisper came from the other end of the corpse:

"This end, you idiot!"

But Antony was too much wrapped in grief to hear. He persevered and then suddenly disclosed to the intently gazing audience Caesar's boots!

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